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THE MUSKET

Lexington High School's Student-run Newspaper — since 1969

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Chess club places second at national competition

By Mark Chonofsky
Editor-in-Chief

LHS' amateur chess team placed second in the nation at the 2009 National Scholastic Chess Championship.

Just one win shy of first place, the team played against a field of 68 competitors from across the country at the tournament in Texas. Four members of Lexington's chess club – Darwin Ding, James Lung, Zaroug Jaleel, and Vikas Shiva– competed.

Zaroug Jaleel, a freshman, expressed both pride and faint disappointment at the result. "We were aiming for first, but seeing that we got second, it was a good result. We can always learn from each tournament we play in."

"We had hoped for first, so I wasn't satisfied," said Vikas Shiva, also a freshman. "At least we had achieved something. Next year, I plan on winning first place with our team."

Chess Club's recent success comes as a surprise to many. "I don't really know too much about the chess club," said Lisa Liu, a senior. "I've heard that quite a few of this year's freshmen are good at chess."

"I didn't even know we had a chess team," said Jasper Lienhard, a junior. "Everybody knows what Amnesty is, but nobody knows about the chess team."

The club's advisor, history teacher Matt Gardner, sought out the Chess Club very early on in his career at LHS. While he had some experience playing chess in college, he never played competitively.

His focus is primarily on fostering an atmosphere for the club to grow. "The club is run by the students," he said. "I like chess, myself. I just asked around."

"We really need him," said Jaleel. "He's the one who's keeping it together, keeping it organized. He's the backbone of the Chess Club. He's pretty much phenomenal."

Staff photo by Mark Chonofsky

[From top right; clockwise] James Lung, Yusheng Hou, David Wu, and Darwin Ding practice their chess skills while Pathik Sen looks on in the background.

The group certainly succeeds in providing a positive atmosphere in which students can play. Even players who compete infrequently attend.

"I come to play chess with friends," said Brian Evans, a sophomore and member of the club.

This camaraderie extends to the core competitors. "I knew I had a passion for chess," said Jaleel. "Chess Club gave us a meeting place."

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Two long-term substitutes join the ranks of the English dept.

By Katherine Mirani
News Editor

Two new teachers have replaced LHS English teachers Robin Strizhak and Sarah Stern, both of whom will spend the rest of the school year on maternity leave.

Deborah Sabin, Stern's replacement, began in November, while Chelsea Weiss replaced Strizhak just after holiday break. Both are teaching Honors American Literature to juniors, with Weiss also taking over Strizhak's senior British Literature class.

A new teacher beginning in the middle of the year is a difficult process for both teacher and student, but so far Sabin and Weiss have had good experiences.

"I would say that my students have been very understanding," said Sabin, "[though] it took a good month for everyone to feel that there had been a complete transition."

Staff photos by Katherine Mirani

Long-term subs Ms. Chelsea Weiss (left) and Ms. Deborah Sabin (right).

Weiss echoed this sentiments, saying that colleagues have been "really supportive" and her students "willing to try new things." Though she realized she was replacing "an LHS legend" when Strizhak left, the opportunity to start in the middle of the year "was exciting because I knew we could reenergize."

Weiss comes from a journalistic background, and this

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More new computers to aid technology infrastructure

By Zach Sabin
Staff Writer

The LHS computer labs may soon be getting a new look, according to Marianne McKenna, director of technology at LHS. New computers will arrive this summer to replace the oldest computers, some of which are up to six years old. This upgrade is part of the long-term technology plan laid out for the Lexington school district.

According to the technology plan for the Lexington Public Schools, which was published in 2008: "In FY 08-09/FY 10-11, depending on town funding levels, we will replace between 300-500 computers to bring us to our core and our replacement goals." The computer replacements will extend over the entire district.

McKenna says that she and her colleagues try to use the old computers "until they drop," though they may be moved multiple times throughout their period of use. Many older ones are placed in secondary classrooms such as kindergarten, where the needs are not so high, or typing labs in the middle schools.

The school system is also adding computers in order to improve their technology infrastructure. According to McKenna, they are trying to move the high school to "mostly wireless." The money for the project comes from a yearly technology budget, which is voted on every June.

Many computers have recently been upgraded as part of a five-year improvement cycle. The computer lab in room 221 was recently up-

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is only her second year as an English teacher. She came to Lexington after teaching English as a Second Language and student-teaching at Newton North High School. "I wanted a job that was more rewarding than my work in the media," Weiss said of her decision to switch from reporting to teaching, "a job that created change instead of reflecting on it."

Weiss feels her journalistic roots have made her "a better editor. Because I did so much editing before, I actually enjoy grading my students' essays... I feel that's one of the areas [in which] I'm more effective."

Sabin taught English classes at LHS until 2003. Upon her return six years later, she believes that there have been many positive changes in teachers' organization.

"There is a lot more consistency from one class to the next... much more talk between teachers... much more focus on the organization of each class," she says.

However, Sabin has also observed a negative change in the attitudes of LHS juniors, commenting that "the students look even more beaten down," and that they "feel the pressure even more" than they did six years ago.

Students are having varied experiences with the new teachers. One student made the universal thumbs-down sign when asked about starting with a new teacher midyear, while another simply commented on the "diversified teaching experience."

Junior Charlotte Cramer, who started the year with Ms. Strizhak, said, "It's confusing to go from one teaching style to another in the middle of the year. You're used to one teaching style, so even if the new teaching style is a good one, it's still an adjustment."

Both teachers understand that students will have a difficult time adapting to new expectations, class structure, and grading criteria. Weiss offers a piece of advice to students, saying that they should "trust the course of their life. There may be changes, but it all works out, and almost everything is a learning experience."

CHESS cont. from PAGE 1

Shiva enjoys "the idea that no one has deciphered the true nature of chess. It's very complex. You can create a sense of originality."

While Chess Club is one avenue for chess practice, members continue exploring the game whenever they can. Players practice frequently, playing games online, solving puzzles, and reviewing.

"We saw the flyers, and we came," said Evans. Chess Club was founded in 2006 and has since passed through the hands of several advisors and student leaders.

"I sought it out," explained Gardner. "The most active members are much more active now [than before]."

The club is aiming to expand, and hopes to do outreach in the elementary and middle schools. Their objective is to establish chess' position as a strong program at LHS.

COMPUTERS cont. from **PAGE 1**

graded, as was the music lab. The servers were also changed, with the most heavily used servers switching to newer models.

The science building received about fifty new laptops for its carts as part of the standard upgrade process. There were also new laptops added to the humanities building, called "Writing Carts."

In fact, the computers in the math building were scheduled for an earlier upgrade, but a software issue caused a delay. The machines will be ordered during the summer, and this could affect what model of iMac the math building will receive — as the school orders the "most current version" that is available at the time of purchase. They generally upgrade the amount of memory (RAM) and disk space that the computers have so that they will last longer.

The school gets special deals on these computers by ordering in bulk and by receiving special education deals from Apple. The district also tries to order when a new generation of computers is being phased in, as there are often good deals on the previous generation. The price of hardware doesn't reflect the overall price, as the school often adds software to the computers, such as Microsoft Office, which can add significantly to the cost.

Not all technology at the school is paid for by the strained budget. LEF also offers "curriculum initiatives" to teachers to move technology into their classrooms. This includes things like smart boards or projectors requested by teachers.

The new computers will increase the speed and usefulness of the labs, as well as attempt to make technology more prominent in the curriculum at LHS.

Robotics creations anything but homework

By Dan Bernstein
Staff Writer

Standing less than six inches off the ground and fastened to a small cylindrical video camera with a Gameboy as a display screen, the Botball robot takes off under the direction of Jeff Lau, a Lexington High School student. Small robots like Botball are the brainchild of the Robotics Team, a new group at LHS. During its meetings in the math building computer lab, creative and intellectual brains come together every Tuesday to plan and build their robots.

While a lack of funding and support has delayed progress for this year's team to begin their work, they remain confident that they will have the funds and parts to compete in the First Tech Challenge (FTC), a competition that they are registered in for the first time. The team has now moved away from Botball for many reasons, largely because FTC allows them to assemble much larger robots for a smaller fee. What is more, FTC is a more nationally recognized competition. Competing in a divisional league like all other extracurricular teams at LHS, the "Two Bits and a Byte" team, as they are called, will go head-to-head against other teams in rapid rounds.

Laid out on a 12'x12' grid, each team puts two robots in their respective corners with their drivers and creators standing behind them. Each match consists of three parts: the autonomous mode, the driver-controlled period and the End Game. Each part has various rules that make the careful design of the robots vital to the competition.

During the autonomous mode, the robots move freely with no control from their team. They attempt to release the balls from a chute by pushing back a small lever. This action demonstrates the recognition of visual colors and shapes. This pushes them into the center of the ring where each team has their own colored base, red or blue.

The team then moves into the driver-controlled round, which comprises the bulk of the match. Team members maneuver their bots to pick up balls and to shoot them into either the baskets sitting just outside the reach of the arena, or into the nets extended above each team's center base. Each ball deposited into these bins by the robots earns their team five points if entered into the center nets, and ten if shot into the outer hoops, four feet away from the arena.

After the completion of this task, the End Game begins. The final thirty seconds of the event are filled with more shooting of the small balls into the nets. A new piece, however, has been introduced: a golden ball. The new addition is worth nothing to the game when shot into a hoop alone, but once securely in a basket, it doubles the number of points that their team gets from that hoop.

File photo

LHS Robotic Team's past creation Botball stands ready to complete any task the future engineers can program it to do.

While high achievement would be nice, the whole club is "mostly just for fun" says Senior Tai Rodrig. The club provides a great learning experience for those new to the technology, as well as an opportunity to meet other people with a common interest. As the group is comprised of only about fifteen students, whether or not the team is interested in growth is a subject of debate. The current small size allows everyone ample participation time. But Senior Jeff Lau, in a dejected tone, seemed to stress the point that "there's only one girl."

FILM cont. from PAGE 5

the best films will make it through. First, second, and third place winners will be chosen at the end of the festival.

The members of the Film Club initially faced some difficulties fundraising for the festival. Thanks to the generosity of FOLMADS and the PTSA, the amount of roughly $1,000 needed to put on the film festival is helping to pay for renting a projector and for reimbursing the cinema. The Venue seats around 200, so the audience for the films is expected to be large. There will be selected works of art by LHS students on display in the lobby of The Venue during the festival. If all goes well, this first LHS film festival will become an anticipated annual event.

Films must be submitted by May 1st; if you have any questions about the festival or about submitting a film, please see Ms. Pappas in room 155.

THE MUSKET

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"Slumping" seniors need motivation

By Jonah Bader & Zoe Wood
Copy Editor & News Editor

It is well known that many seniors are less motivated to engage in their classes during the second semester. They already have plans for next year, including attending college, working, joining the Armed Forces, or pursuing another opportunity. While these future endeavors may be more exciting than high school, it is the school's job to keep the students focused on the present. LHS should be more creative in offering alternatives to those who are ailing from "senioritis." Principal Natalie Cohen agrees, and is looking for the cure.

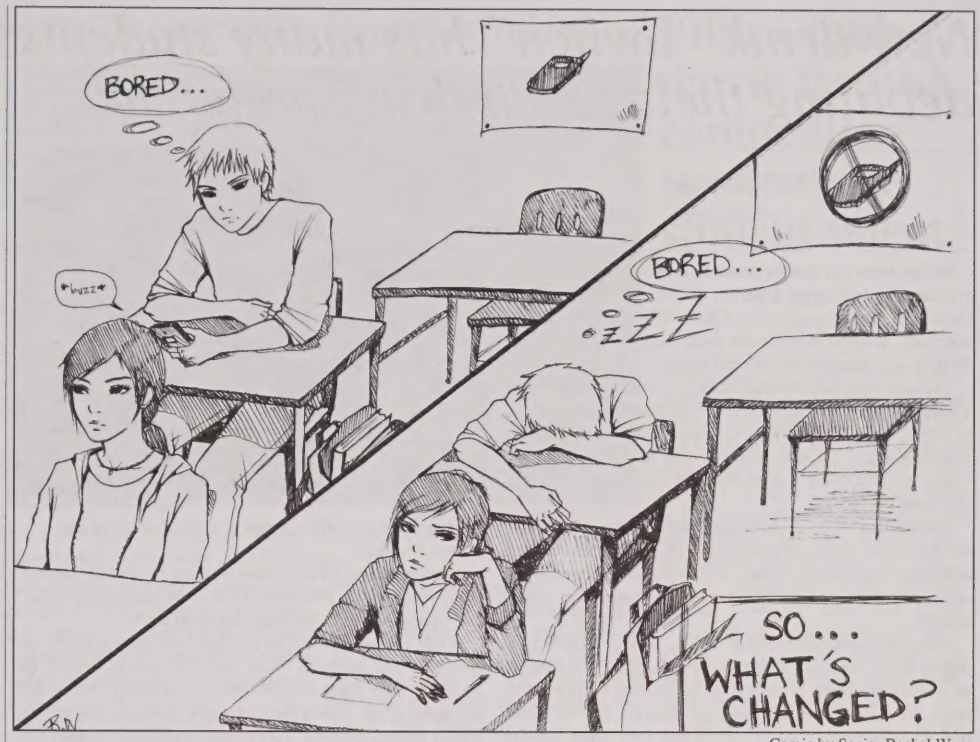
Many ideas have already been suggested, none of which are without their flaws. A capstone project, in which a student would complete a research project on a topic of his or her choice, is one idea. Another suggestion is to offer short, specialized courses taught by teachers or retirees. While there are merits to each of these ideas and seniors would probably prefer them to regular class, there is a better alternative.

This alternative is similar to a capstone project. The project could be done independently or in a small group. While the student would still have a teacher advisor, the nature of the project would be entirely up to the student. For example, someone interested in English may choose to write a children's book. Someone who prefers history could film a mini-documentary on a historical event. In short, an original project could be selected for any academic discipline.

The process would begin with a project proposal to a teacher in the appropriate department. If approved, the student would start working on the project and be assigned an advisor; if rejected, he or she would submit a different project idea until the idea is approved. The seniors would have to periodically check in with their advisor and show them their progress. The advisor would act as a resource but nothing more– the project is intended to be independent. At the end of the allotted time, the students would present their finished product to an audience of their choosing, whether it be classmates, teachers, underclassmen, or another more relevant audience depending on the project.

This project would be an option for all seniors, but not a requirement. Students with a heavy course load, perhaps including AP classes, would be able to opt out. Perhaps students who are interested and able to do the project would spend half of their day in regular classes and then have the rest of the day to work on their project. Students would need to work out their schedules depending on their classes.

These plans are a promising alternative for second semester seniors, and would be a step towards ending the infamous "Senior Slump."



Comic by Senior Rachel Wang

Participation in a cappella groups should not require chorus classes

By Mia Karnofsky
Editor-in-Chief

Lexington High School's music department already looked different this fall due to the departure of Mr. Brian O'Connell, the former Choral Director who worked at LHS for more than 15 years. Students had the chance to become acquainted with the new chorus and music theory teacher, Mr. Jason Iannuzzi, during a meeting over the summer. Those who had learned from Mr. O'Connell transitioned back into music class without him. But for those students involved with the a cappella program, a separate change in the choral department became evident when they learned that a certain policy would be enforced for the first time in the new school year.

In the 2009-2010 Program of Studies, "Concurrent enrollment in Mixed Chorus and audition" is stated as a prerequisite for joining the a cappella program. The stipulation has always been included in the course booklet's description of the student-run singing ensembles, which incidentally names two groups that no longer exist. Leaders of a cappella groups are aware that they are supposed to ask those trying out if they are enrolled in a chorus class. Many do adhere to this practice, but they mostly ignore the potential members' responses and accept the best singers for the Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass parts. But if they had not followed the rule in the past, it was because it was never required.

Last fall, the decision to enforce this chorus class policy appeared sudden to many, accompanied by no explicit justification. Current members were allowed to remain in a group whether or not they had taken a singing course at LHS, but those auditioning would have to abide by the now-adhered-to rule. Some a cappella groups were concerned about finding enough new singers who would fulfill the requirement. It was especially worrisome for the all-male and co-ed groups, considering the small numbers of men who sing in the school choirs. Even after finding great voices to fill the parts, many found that the rule raised the more legitimate question of whether or not a school department can dictate the conditions for membership of an extracurricular organization.

As a member of an a cappella group since I was a sophomore, I stand by the conviction that the a cappella program at LHS is indeed an extra-curricular activity. Except for the three traditional Jamborees each year, the groups are independent of the school. Every group is created by students, rehearses outside of school hours and off-campus, and arranges its own music. A cappella groups are self-instructed organizations, unlike Lexington sports teams or drama productions, which are directly led by faculty. Still, football players and actors in the musical are not required to take school classes pertaining to these activities. This discrepancy points strongly toward keeping school regulations off of a cappella membership.

When someone auditions for a cappella, experience is less a factor than vocal range, pitch, and blend are. While many of the singers are current or former students in courses like Mixed Chorus, Concert Choir, and Madrigals, there is still a level of variety in individuals' interests, which I believe makes LHS a cappella uniquely expansive and successful. I think it is important that the groups can each represent a diverse population of students instead of just a sample of the ones who choose to focus on music academically. If we leave out people who are not officially part of the choral department, we are inclined to create a more homogenous and perhaps less talented community of musicians.

"... it is important that the groups can each represent a diverse population of students"

The recent modification in the policy's enforcement is not necessarily reflective of the choral department's change in leadership. Instead, it brings to light the archaic wording in the Program of Studies and its inconsistency with the administrative actions surrounding the policy. The rule has been applied with an irregularity that implies a lack of cooperation between students and faculty, which is an unfair suggestion for such a longstanding and thriving program. The intention of the rule is lost on me, because the current state of the a cappella program proves that its student leaders are more than capable of choosing the best singers to complement each group.

New drink "Switch" has many students debating their lunch drink preferences

By Noah Star
Op/Ed Editor

For students purchasing lunch in either Commons, there are always a variety of different options for food and beverage. But several weeks ago, Chartwells, the food service company, decided to add even more choices. A new drink, Switch, was sampled in both cafeterias.

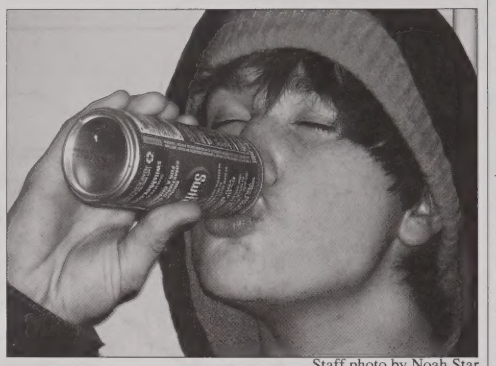
The sampling and offering of Switch was unprecedented. Vitamin Water and Gatorade had been the core alternatives to water, but this new drink seemed to beget competition. Sophia Bernitz, a sophomore and new fan of Switch said, "They are refreshing, I don't feel bad when I drink them. I buy [one] every day."

The student body seems to have taken a liking to Switch; the drinks are flying off the shelves. But even with Switch's newfound popularity, many still wonder where Switch originated from and how it came to the Lexington school system.

Nancy Wiseman, Director of Dining Services for the Lexington Public Schools, explained the change: "Our company and our staff here is always on the lookout for new products. We regularly attend meetings with the School Nutrition Association of Massachusetts and very often vendors set up booths to display, sample, and explain new products. We learned of Switch at one of these meetings."

Chartwells decided to introduce Switch to the high school and the two middle schools because of its perceived nutritional value. Mrs. Wiseman continued, "Here in Lexington we have a very conservative wellness policy and many of the foods and drinks offered at other school districts are not acceptable to our district … Switch seemed to fit the bill since it is 100% juice, plus it's sparkling. It contains no high fructose corn syrup. Switch has been receiving widespread success in other districts with students, so we decided to try it here."

Although the health benefits of Switch were a motivating factor for Chartwells, the student population has not



Staff photo by Noah Star

Sophomore James Fraser enjoys the last drops of his Switch beverage.

seemed to notice. When asked whether he thought the beverage was healthy, Freshman Paul Zhou responded with, "I don't know, it might be, but it probably isn't."

While the success of Switch has been widespread, the question still remains: Why did Chartwells "make the Switch?" Was there any benefit to marketing this widely unknown drink within the Lexington schools, and will the school system become a corporate marketing ground with companies fighting to keep their drinks popular?

Mrs. Wiseman responded to these questions saying, "Chartwells does not receive any 'extra funds' for ordering Switch. We are simply trying to offer the most expansive beverage selection to students in Lexington while maintaining our commitment to good nutrition… We do not play any favorites with beverages."

If Izze, another Pepsi-owned drink, passes Chartwells' tests, then Switch and the other offered beverages will have even more competition. The raving success and praise for Switch serves as a good omen for students looking for even more options.

But for the time being, Switch remains the newest liquid on campus.

Winterfest brings light & life to LHS with students' stunning productions

By Julie Belkova
Features Editor

The lights are off, and people inside the Black Box are waiting for the show to begin. They are all gathered for Winterfest.

"It has been a tradition at the school since I first came here; back then it was set in the spring and was called Springfest. Plays that would be submitted would have to be judged upon whether they would be put in the final show. Now things are much different," says Mr. Bogart, one of the drama department heads and coordinators of Winterfest.

Things are different now, as any LHS high school student is eligible to submit their play. They do not have to be involved in the Drama Club or in any of the drama classes offered.

In other words, if you are willing to put your work out there, you are guaranteed a supportive cast and crew for a spectacular performance. The student writers choose whether or not to direct their own plays. They are also able to pick their own cast members, through auditions or just casting their classmates and friends.

The planning for the show began in late December, and rehearsals kicked off right after winter break. The performances lasted three days– Thursday, Friday and Saturday– and each time the plays were shown in a different order, with "This Enchanted Life" incorporated in the works.

"This Enchanted Life" is a play written by the Drama Club members and is expected to be presented at the Emerson Fest at Emerson College. Drama Club members are looking forward to viewing other high schools' productions as well as performing their own. But when talking about Winterfest, the participants were even more enthusiastic, and ready to share their thoughts.

"Winterfest is the most exciting and enriching drama event of the year because of the different students' perspectives shown on stage," said Gabi Goszczynki, a member of the Drama Club.

Some students, like Zoe Miller, had "[written] and directed their very first play" for the show. "Watching my play come to life before an audience was really fulfilling, and exciting," said Miller.

Helen Walsh had a similar experience helping out her friend John Crittenden on his play. "Participating in my friend's play was an eye-opening experience because I got to see how talented my peers [are]."

Mr. Bogart agreed: "The plays were strong, and it was wonderful to see that 95% of the plays presented were written by students here — the plays were really great!" Overall, the audience seemed to think so too, clapping and laughing at appropriate moments.

Winterfest was incredibly successful thanks to everyone who worked hard on the following plays: "Hush: An Interview with America" by James Still; "Thanksgiving" by Brent Horowitz; "Incarnadine" by John Crittenden; "Call Waiting" by Sophie Harari; "Surround Sound" by Zoe Miller; "Slaves to Fatalism" by Lucia Berger; "Criminal Tastes" by Wally Napier; "Hunger" by Lucia Ferguson; "When God Brings You Luck" by Julia Friedman; and "Drama Club Desk" directed and advised by Mr. Despres.

LEF supports innovation in Lex. schools since 1989

By Abby Heingartner
Layout Coordinaor

The Kill-a-Watt devices used in Earth Science classes, the interactive white boards used for French and Latin learning, and the Art Gallery at LHS' entrance all have one characteristic in common: they would not have been possible without the help of the Lexington Education Foundation.

Some of the adjectives that have been used in reference to the Lexington Education Foundation are "committed", "extraordinary", "encouraging", "vibrant", and "supportive." Established in 1989 and run by community volunteers, LEF is described on its website as "an independent charitable organization with a mission to enhance educational excellence for the children of the Lexington Public Schools."

> ***"I think I really benefited from growing up here … It's wonderful to live in a town where the community really cares about schools.***
>
> -Deborah Rourke, co-president of LEF

"The idea was not to supplement the budget … but to fund innovative projects," explained founder Dan Fenn.

Since its creation over 20 years ago, LEF has funded over $2.9 million worth of grants. Grants dispensed in the 2009-2010 school year, which the organization's annual report cites as ranging from "enriching math and science skills" to "elevating the arts," totaled $213,893.

Proposed entirely by teachers and administrators, grants can fund projects ranging from installing interactive whiteboards in individual classrooms to providing professional development opportunities for teachers.

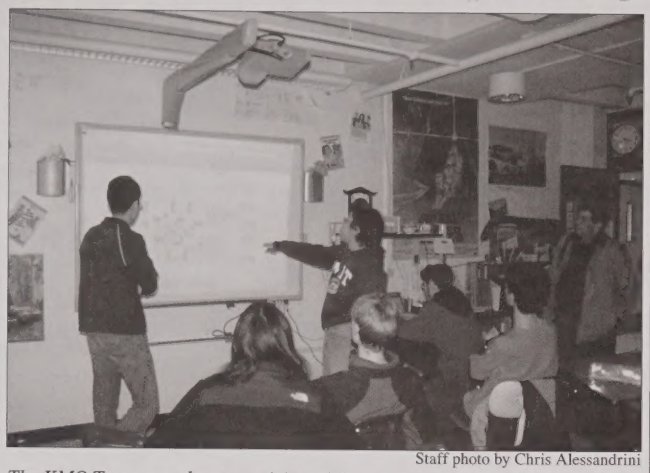
"One of the many wonderful things about the organization is that a lot of the grants are able to touch many children over many schools," said former LEF co-president James Devellis. Recent programs funded by LEF have included concussion screening for student athletes at LHS, "green backpacks" for the elementary schools to help students learn about electricity, and the introduction of algebra and geometry games for high school students having trouble with math.

Teachers interested in receiving a grant must fill out a thorough application explaining "what they want to do,

LEF cont. on **PAGE 5**

The next generation of 'Jeopardy' winners in training

By Chris Alessandrini
A&E Editor



Staff photo by Chris Alessandrini

The KMO Team, seen here practicing trivia questions in room 520, recently placed ninth in the nation out of 678 teams."

Do you have a knack for remembering esoteric facts? Do you like to collect obscure quotes? Do you know what a barograph is? If you answered yes to any of the above questions, then maybe you should consider joining Lexington's nascent Knowledge Master Open (KMO) Team. Started this past September by senior Seongcheol Kim, the KMO Team has already placed ninth out of 678 teams nationally, and is preparing for another KMO competition this April.

While this is all very impressive, you might be asking yourself: what exactly is the KMO Competition? It is a national trivia bee that requires participating teams to answer two hundred multiple-choice questions, with one minute allotted to each. On the day of the competition the team congregates in the computer lab and, over the course of three blocks, try to the best of their combined abilities to answer every question.

"When none of us knows the answer off the bat, we have to work toward it by putting together different pieces of knowledge that different people bring to the table — and all of that within the [allotted] 60 seconds," Kim explained. "It's a collaborative effort."

Kim started the team out of nostalgia for his middle school KMO team. "I remember how enthusiastically I participated in KMO in middle school. When I came to LHS, a lot of the academic teams were concentrated in math and the sciences," Kim said. "But the KMO [competition] is very academically inclusive." The competition covers a wide array of subjects, including (but not limited to): world history, literature, biology, psychology, economics, and government. There is even a category entitled "Useless Trivia." There is something for everyone, which is what makes the competition so appealing to teenagers across the nation.

As the first semester of the year came to a close, Kim and his teammates began to think about the future of their team. The majority of the team's members that participated in the December competition were juniors and seniors. "I wanted to keep it a little small-scale at first," Kim explained. "But we do have to expand our base. We're looking for [a team with a] balance of breadth and depth — dilettantes in a wide range of disciplines, and those who have a deeper knowledge, too."

For those of you who want to join the KMO Team but are unsure of your ability to commit to the team on a weekly basis, heed the words of junior Ellen Kim: "It's not like we're forced to study– it's pretty relaxed, actually. I'm not always able to come to every meet."

As my interview came to an end I decided to stick around and see what an average meeting was like. The team turned to face the ActivBoard and switched the lights off. Questions began to flash across the screen, and the team began to discuss answers avidly. The room was filled with murmurs of arcane trivia and laughter.

If you enjoy the small details that compose the greater mosaic of our world, then you might want to stop by and visit with the KMO Team. They meet every Friday from 2:30 to 4:00 in room 520. Your stores of "useless trivia" might finally find a home. Those futile facts you've been saving up are more valuable than you'll ever realize — especially if you decide to join the KMO Team.

Oh, and by the way, a barograph is a barometer that records barometric pressure on a graph over time. Just in case you were wondering.

Film Club's movie festival, competition to showcase student talent

By Lydia Gold
Staff Writer

Have you ever wanted to see a film you made play on the big screen? Have you ever wondered what the art of film was really all about? On May 24, the students of Lexington High School will be given a chance to debut their films at The Venue (formerly The Flick) in the first ever LHS Film Festival. Any high school student living in Lexington can submit their work, including students from the Lexington Christian Academy and Minuteman Tech. A panel of judges from the Film Club (the founders of the festival) will determine which films are shown.

Magda Bermudez, a member of the Film Club adds, "There is no theme between the movies. They can be any time length less than 21 minutes and can be on any topic the filmmaker chooses."

The Film Club decided to forgo a unifying theme for the festival to allow for unlimited creativity. Film styles may include but are not limited to: documentary, stop-motion, performance, and short films.

"I've wanted to do [the film festival] since I got here," says Ms. Pappas, the teacher advisor for the Film Club. She believes that there is not as much attention paid to the art of filmmaking as there is to the other fine arts at LHS. So when a few students from the Tunnel Vision Film Club brought the idea of the film festival to Ms. Pappas, they decided to go for it.

"The major purpose is to showcase student art. Seeing your own movie on the big screen really adds confidence," says Rae Aggerwhil, one of the main founders of the festival. It is also a way for people outside of the classroom to view student films and a way to further bring the Lexington community together. Hopefully this event will help open the eyes of the Lexington community to the production of cinematic fine arts.

Although it is a festival, it is essentially a competition because not all films submitted will be shown. Only

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LEF cont. from **PAGE 4**

why they want to do it, how they think it will impact students, and how much they think it will cost," said current co-president Deborah Rourke. "All grants are read, evaluated, and discussed in a rigorous review process to determine their merit."

"I think I really benefited from growing up here," said Rourke, who passed through the Lexington school system herself. "It's wonderful to live in a town where the community really cares about schools."

LEF is able to continue supporting Lexington schools through donations from individuals and local businesses. In addition to yearly appeal letters sent out to all families with children in Lexington schools, LEF raises funds with two annual events. The first is the Trivia Bee held each year at Cary Hall, where teachers, parents, and businesses compete.

"The teams pay a fee to participate," said Rourke. Teacher teams, however, are sponsored by local businesses. "It's really fun, and it's free to attend."

The second annual event is the Spring Gala, a celebration with live entertainment, and both live and silent auctions.

Another easy way to support LEF is through STAR awards. Parents can donate $20 or more to LEF in honor of a teacher who has especially influenced their child, and that teacher will receive a certificate.

In the 21 years that it has been around, LEF has truly made a difference for thousands of Lexington students. "LEF provides more opportunities to learn, and gives teachers more tools to teach and make learning more exciting," said Rourke. "It embodies the essential values of our community."

To learn more about the Lexington Education Foundation, or to donate, visit http://www.lexedfoundation.org/index.htm.

After enjoying your issue of The Musket, *please remember to recycle it or pass it on to someone else.*

Advanced Placement (AP Comics) — By Aaron Prager

Murphy and Williams will be representatives of female sports program in Lexington

By Caiti Zeytoonian
Op/Ed Editor

Each year, the Lexington High School Athletic Department and faculty carefully select female student athletes to represent the female sports program. This year, the chosen two are Meaghan Murphy and Kyleigh Williams. The two seniors have both accomplished tremendous athletic success: Murphy is the captain of both the softball and volleyball teams, while Williams is the lacrosse and hockey team captain. However, the girls were chosen based on much more than their athletic talent.

Murphy and Williams are both hard-working, dependable students who share their optimism, leadership, and positive spirit with every person and situation that they encounter. Dominique Serio, a friend and teammate of Murphy's, described her as "an inspiration to all," and "such a positive person… she shines in all aspects of her life." Teammate Katty Lutz described Williams as "an amazing player and friend, on and off the field."

The young women are a positive example for future generations of LHS students and athletes. As they graduate this year and move on to college, Murphy and Williams leave their own marks on Lexington High School. Williams intends on attending Dartmouth College staring this fall, where she will be playing lacrosse. While Murphy is still immersed in the college admissions process, she hopes to make a decision soon. Regardless of where life takes them, they will undoubtedly excel in all that they do.

File photos

Murphy (above) and Williams (below) were chosen for their spirit and dedication.

Synchronized skating teams from Lexington go to Berlin

By Zoe Wood
News Editor

On Sunday, January 17, Lexington's synchronized skating teams returned from The Cup of Berlin in Berlin, Germany. The Lexettes and the Haydenettes, the junior and senior teams from the Hayden Figure Skating Club in Lexington, both brought home bronze medals.

Some may be familiar with synchronized skating, but for those who are not, synchronized skating is figure skating with a team. To compete, sixteen girls skate onto the ice to perform together. They are judged in two categories: technique and artistic interpretation. At the higher levels, teams perform both a short program and a long program, and the two scores are combined. The highest score wins.

In Berlin, the Haydenettes competed against eleven other senior teams from all over the world. The Lexettes also faced heavy competition from France, Germany, Sweden, and Finland. In each case, Finnish teams were the hardest to beat.

Lauren Lapuck, a freshman at LHS and a skater on the Haydenettes, was relatively pleased with the way her team skated. "The short [program] was great," Lapuck said, "but during the long [program] we did not skate our best, you could say."

Other skaters found the feeling of competing in Berlin similarly exhilarating. "When you compete there, you know that not many people can do stuff like that and that it's a once in a lifetime kind of thing," said Meghan Crocker, a sophomore at LHS and a skater on the Lexettes.

Lapuck described competing as joyful and exciting. She loves the feeling of skating with her team.

The Lexettes, who have had many ups and downs already this season and did not qualify for Junior World Championships, were ecstatic after they performed their short program.

"We came back and showed the world what we could do," said skater and LHS sophomore Alaina Salusti. She also remarked that competing in Berlin was not very stressful. "We had nothing to lose," she said.

Alixe Conn, a freshman at LHS and a skater for the Ice Mates, another Lexington team, said that the Lexettes' performance was "the best of the entire year," and that the "Haydenettes did well as always." Conn hopes to skate with the Lexettes next year.

Most skaters agree that competing internationally is a unique experience and is unlike competing within one's own country.

"It's different," said Crocker, "you'd be in the same elevator as [teams] speaking different languages than you, and you don't know if they're talking about you." Salusti also mentioned that jetlag can be difficult to overcome. "We went to bed at six on the first night and still woke up exhausted," she said.

At an international competition, "you're not only representing your club but your entire country," said Lapuck. And indeed, in Berlin, the Lexettes and Haydenettes were not called by those names but were instead called Team USA.

Despite their victories in Berlin, both the Lexettes and the Haydenettes have much work to do to prepare for upcoming competitions. These include, for the Lexettes, the Connecticut Classic, the Eastern Sectional Championships in Lowell, Mass., and the National Championships in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The Haydenettes will also go to the Eastern Sectional Championships, the National Championships, and, if they are ranked first or second in the country, will go on to compete at the World Synchronized Skating Championships, which will take place this year in Colorado Springs, Colorado.

Lexington's superfans take "super" to a new level

By Alex Stuart
Staff Writer

We have all seen them. Some of us have even been them. They are loud, obnoxious, overly energetic, and sometimes rude. They are often told to quiet down and censor themselves. Despite all this, they are an essential part of Lexington sports—they are Lexington's fan base.

Many of these supporters, labeled "Superfans," mark themselves with bright yellow t-shirts, displaying the nature of their "fandom." There are, however, many additional attributes that constitute a Superfan beyond the mark of clothing.

Sophomore Danielle Livneh, a hardcore fan, explained that "being a Superfan in Lexington means wearing your neon yellow shirt even on non-game-days, promoting via Facebook, and making sure the other towns know Lexington is better."

Indeed, on any given day, it is not uncommon to see the neon yellow mark of the Superfan. When a game day finally arrives, many Superfans exhibit a palpable excitement and cannot stop talking about the upcoming game. As for the day after the match, Superfans can barely talk at all.

"It's all about supporting your team through the good times and bad — and cheering so much that you lose your voice," explained junior Sophie Harari.

These ideas only represent one end of the spectrum. Some Superfans have a slightly different approach. At each game, it is clear that being loud is at least as important as what one wears. These Superfans constantly cheer on players of their own team, and heckle those of the other. It is not uncommon for a teacher to tell the Superfans to quiet down, relax, and stop being so rowdy, but many fans think that such behavior is essential to the fun.

There is a common agreement among most students that all Superfans, put in the simple words of junior Luke Psyhojos, "go absolutely crazy." Leif Inouye agreed, insisting that a Superfan has to "go to games and be loud."

File Photo

A busload of superfans display their Lexington pride complete with yellow and blue face paint.

Out of all the sports in LHS, the most common ones that Superfans attend are basketball, hockey and soccer. During soccer season, junior Charlie Guthrie was an avid supporter throughout the team's journey to the playoffs. Now, as a member of the Lexington Varsity Hockey team, Guthrie enjoys his own following of Superfans who have been dubbed "Charlie's Angels".

"Being a Superfan is tough," said Guthrie. "You have to sacrifice your social life and your academic life to the team. But in the end, it's worth it."

He added, "It is nice having a group of dedicated fans that cheer for me. It's a great boost of moral, and I like to give that boost to other sports players and teams."

The definition of a Superfan, the thoughts and meaning behind the title, is different to each individual. Some think it means going to games over schoolwork, others associate it with the famous neon yellow t-shirts, and still others determine it is all about being loud.

The best way to sum up the concept would be in the words of Oren Ritchkin, who is an attendee of basketball, hockey, and soccer games and wears the neon yellow mark of a Superfan. "The Superfan is a rare breed," stated Ritchkin. "A Superfan endlessly supports his or her team. They come to almost every game, and risk everything to be the most obnoxious (best) fan section there is. A Superfan is someone I'd want supporting me."